

CIRM President Alan Trounson To Step Down

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San Francisco, CA – Alan Trounson, PhD, has announced he is going to step down as President of the stem cell agency, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), in order to spend more time with his family in Australia.

Dr. Trounson says the agency's governing Board, the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), has asked him, and he has agreed, to remain as President, while the agency begins the search for a new President.

The agency is also discussing with Dr. Trounson the possibility of him remaining affiliated with the agency in a role to be determined.

"We have accelerated the development of regenerative medicine, and I would love to continue at CIRM as these advancements begin making a difference to patients with debilitating injuries and disease. But the agency needs a full-time President and I need to spend more time with my family. The two needs are incompatible, so it is necessary for me to step down as President. This was a very difficult decision to make," says Dr. Trounson. "I have loved working at CIRM and being part of something truly pioneering – a revolution in stem cell science and medicine – but ultimately it came down to a choice between CIRM and a life including my family."

"Alan has been a remarkable leader of the agency for almost six years," says Jonathan Thomas, PhD, JD, Chair of the Board. "He has led us through some challenging times, been the driving force behind some truly innovative ideas – such as the Bridges and Creativity Training Programs, the Alpha Clinic model for delivering new therapies to patients, a stem cell genomics program and an iPS cell bank for interrogating the cause and developing new treatments for really serious and complex diseases. He has helped establish us as a world leader in the field of stem cell research. We are truly grateful for his vision, his expertise and his leadership. He has created a legacy which he can be proud of."

Dr. Trounson joined CIRM in late 2007 after serving as Professor of Stem Cell Sciences and Founding Director of the Monash Immunology and Stem Cell Laboratories at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. He also founded the National Biotechnology Centre of Excellence – more commonly called the 'Australian Stem Cell Centre', co-founded the Monash Institute for Reproduction and Development – and was a pioneer in the development of human in vitro fertilization (IVF).

"Since joining CIRM in 2007, Alan has helped transform not only this agency but the entire field of stem cell research," says Sherry Lansing, Cancer Patient Advocate and longtime Chair of the Board's Governance Subcommittee. "Alan has instilled a sense of urgency in our core mission -- funding research that is leading to faster clinical trials of treatments for deadly diseases."

"Alan Trounson made a phenomenal contribution to the global advance of stem cell therapies through his six year service as President of California's stem cell research funding agency created by Proposition 71," says Robert Klein, Chair Emeritus of the stem cell agency. "Through his leadership of the agency, California stem cell researchers and biotech start-ups have published over 1750 medical discoveries and reached the threshold of human trials with their first wave of human therapies for heart disease, leukemia, type 1 diabetes, cancer, macular degeneration (blindness), and HIV/AIDs. His leadership came at a great personal sacrifice, separated by a huge distance from his family in Australia for more than half of his term; patients and scientists—globally—owe Alan Trounson a huge debt of gratitude for changing the future of human suffering from chronic disease and injury for every family. In partnership with CIRM's Board, and staff, his leadership of California scientists has planted the seeds of a historic revolution in medicine and patient care."

Jeff Sheehy, another longtime Board member and a Patient Advocate for HIV says; "Alan has been an irresistible force in moving stem cell therapies into the clinic and, as a patient advocate, I am deeply grateful to him for his relentless determination. One of the key features of his extraordinary leadership over the last six years has been his ability to achieve one of the seminal visions embedded in Proposition 71, the seamless integration of patients, industry and researchers into a harmonious, synergistic union. We are much, much closer to cures, thanks to his efforts."

"It's been an amazing time, working with some of the most dedicated people and inspirational individuals," says Dr. Trounson. "I feel both fortunate and honored to have been part of something that is transforming the face of medicine, and part of an organization that is helping lead the world in that transformation. I have been privileged to work with some very special colleagues at CIRM and I know their expertise, professionalism and dedication will be a tremendous resource for my successor."

About CIRM: CIRM was established in November 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research.

Contact:

Don Gibbons

415-396-9117

dgibbons@cirm.ca.gov

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